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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4743

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 3416

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0884

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0436

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000519

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNHRC](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPANISH FEELING GOOD ABOUT UNHRC CANDIDACY

REF: STATE 46477

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The Spanish MFA Human Rights Office believes France and Spain are poised to win the two WEOG seats on the UN Human Rights Council. Deputy DG Fernandez-Arias asked for U.S. support and also asked that the U.S. remember a "debt" to Spain from a previous election. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Spanish Deputy Director General for Human Rights Fernando Fernandez-Arias told Poloff May 9 that Spain is confident it is well-positioned to win one of two WEOG seats on the UN Human Rights Council in the May 21 elections (reftel). Fernandez-Arias said that Spain believes it has received sufficient commitments "with some margin to spare," including 24 of 27 EU votes. According to their analysis, France is likely to win the most votes of the three WEOG candidates, while there are signs of "panic" in the UK camp.

¶3. (C) Fernandez-Arias noted that one advantage for Spain is the UK and France are both seeking reelection, while Spain declared its 2008 candidacy at the outset of the UNHRC two years ago. He also said that some delegations with whom the Spanish have lobbied have expressed reservations about the UK's recent human rights record. Spain has argued for the need to respect the principle of rotation of seats, which he said carries weight with non P-5 nations. He noted that Foreign Minister Moratinos will be in New York May 19-20 to make a final strong push for the candidacy.

¶4. (U) Laying out some of the arguments for Spain's candidacy, Fernandez-Arias noted that Spain is the third leading donor to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the second leading donor for UNIFEM, the leading donor for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, and also created a Euro 528M trust fund within the UNDP for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

¶5. (C) Fernandez-Arias noted recent lobbying in Washington by Ambassador Westendorp, and he said he hoped Spain could count on U.S. support based on the strength of the Spanish candidacy and its outstanding human rights record, both domestically and in international fora. Fernandez-Arias said the GOS understands well the U.S. reservations about the Council and is committed to making the HRC effective and balanced. He expressed his hope that bilateral cooperation would continue to be strong in international HR fora. He said he hoped the maxim that P-5 countries always vote for P-5 countries would not hold true in this case.

//"DEBT TO SPAIN"//

¶ 6. (C) Finally, Fernandez-Arias asked Poloff to relay to Department that the Spanish human rights team believes the U.S. "has a debt" to Spain from the 2002 UNCHR elections. He said Spain, at U.S. request, withdrew its 2002 candidacy for the Commission at the eleventh hour, providing a WEOG clean slate and ensuring the victory of the last-minute U.S. candidacy. Said Fernandez-Arias, "We did not ask for anything then, and we are not asking for anything now. The only thing we ask is that it be remembered."

¶ 7. (U) Post has sent a scanned copy of the MFA Dip Note announcing Spain's candidacy, along with Spain's pledges and voluntary commitments to EUR/WE.

Llorens